

FreeThought

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED RATIONALIST MONTHLY

ANTI SUPERSTITION SPECIAL

NOVEMBER 1977



AFTER PROHIBITION, WHAT ?

"For the past five or six years I have drunk a glass of my own urine. It is very very good for you and it is free. It does not cost anything."

—MORARJI DESAI.

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God is a myth ; immortality an illusion ; Religion a gigantic fraud.

Letters

ANTI CASTE ISSUE

Sir,—Your September issue has pleased me very much.

Not only the so called Hindus are caste ridden but also the so-called Harijans are equally entangled in it. A shoe-maker (Chamar) does not inter-dine nor inter-marry with a sweeper (Bhangi)

Late Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya did not allow his son's wife to attend the death ceremony of her mother because her father married his second daughter to a non-Malviya Brahman.

We have to mend the caste mentality of the whole Hindu public.

Sant Ram, B.A.,
Pandorak (Punjab)

(The 90-year old Mr. Sant Ram, who founded Jat Pat Torak Mandal, is next only to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in the field of caste annihilation—Ed)

Sir,—The Cartoon on first page of your Sept. issue of 'Freethought' is Wonderful. Kindly publish the present achievements of I.R.A. through 'Freethought'

—K.K. Narayanan, Bombay.

(A more detailed account of the activities of I.R.A. is published every month in the NEWS LETTERS circulated only among members. Those who are not already members may therefore enrol themselves as members of I.R.A. and get free copies of the News letters.—Ed.)

(Continued on page 266)

URINE THERAPY

Sir,—Just because the urine therapy has been expounded by no less a person than the Prime Minister after self experiment, the idea is likely to gain public interest though not in actual practice. A Tamil scholar and an ayurvedic pandit recently told me that unlike the allopaths, the makers of ayurvedic medicines, cannot state on the label of the bottle the various ingredients that make up the mixture, as the ingredients would contain such disgusting things like urine, dung etc. The urine therapy, he explained, is a very ancient Hindu invention, but kept secret in the medical fraternity for fear of the native system losing esteem and dignity. The urine of the ass is stated to be good for curing leprosy. Similarly the urine and faeces of many animals have medicinal value. It is possible that like the dung, human faeces may have therapeutic value and we do not know when it will be made public.

It is revolting to think that nature would have provided for the re-cycling of human waste back into the body. Forcing an accused or a convict to drink his own urine has been found to be a form of torture in police stations. But it looks as if the cruelty actually aided the man's health. Though the urine therapy may be beneficial, there are other remedies to meet the situation. Any medicine has got to be decent and wholesome in its origin.

Prof. A.M. Dharmalingam, Bangalore.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Religious belief is powerful in proportion to the want of scientific knowledge on the part of the believer.

—CHARLES BRAUDLAUGH

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POLLUTIONS GALORE

It is not an exaggeration to say that Hindus lead a life of mere rituals and superstitions. Right at birth, a child and her mother are treated as polluted. They have to go through ritual cleansing to join the rest of the family. Menstrual period is another polluted period when the lady is kept out of bounds. Touching a person of another caste is pollution. Touching a person who has not bathed in the morning is a pollution. Namboodri priests of Kerala are believed to bathe scores of times in a day to wash away pollution! Dead body is polluted.

RIDDLE OF CLOTHES

If touching an unbathed person is pollution, can the same thing be not said of the washed clothes put on after bath? Suppose soiled clothes are washed by the person before bath, since he has not bathed, he leaves pollution in the clothes even at the end of the washing. when the clothes are put on the next morning (after bath), previous morning's pollution catches on!

To avoid this, if soiled clothes are washed after bath, then the pollution from the clothes immediately affects the "purified" person. He is left polluted the whole day!

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TEACH THEM NO SUPERSTITION

By MUKUND

The author is an M.A., Ph.D. in archaeology and a life member of I.R.A. His article is very illuminating and and scholarly.—Ed.

All parents desire that children should be successful in life. Serious attention is therefore paid to their formal education and physical health. But the concept of success is usually limited to health, wealth and social prestige. Acquiring the grasp of human

life and the art of living, are hardly considered as success. A bold cheerful individuality, free from all inhibitions, complexes, prejudices, and prepared for an intense purposeful life, is far from being the ideal.

DENIAL DANGEROUS

While the body is looked after, the society feared, the mind is badly neglected. No thoughtful precautions to avoid influences, harmful to the healthy growth of mind, are taken. On the contrary, just the opposite is done. It is mainly by injecting all sorts of superstitious beliefs in the innocent minds. The highly educated parents also do not take a serious view of this evil. Even those who discard superstitions, hardly bother to assess the damage done by such beliefs. The tragedy lies not so much in the failure to realise the truth, but in the denial to accept it at all cost.

SPLIT PERSONALITY

To be superstitious is a human weakness arising out of man's fear and ignorance of the unknown. As knowledge advances, ignorance is supposed to die out. But the ignorance that gets fossilised into superstition, becomes indestructible. Almost every mind is a godown or rather a dump of such fossils, the relics of our pre-history so to say, which we never bother to examine critically. The weakness is so formidable that man has ultimately made superstition compatible with science, by providing two water-tight compartments in the same mind. A split personality practising science, humanism, secularism etc., in one walk of life and escapism, gullibility, intolerance etc., in the other, is bound to be far from what it could be at its best. When

a fundamental contradiction is housed in a single mind, the behaviour resulting out of it, cannot be dependably normal. But we do not dare to face the situation; we try to contain it by rationalisation.

The place of superstition would always remain assured as long as we take life to be a course prescribed by the society, and refuse to apply our own intelligence to the totality of existence. We are like good boys, expected to complete the course and pass the examinations with as many distinctions as possible. Social recognition is the coveted reward. Since a body of superstitions is laid down in the curriculum, that easy portion must be covered as a scoring subject.

What is necessary therefore, is to discard not just a few superstitions, but to change the erroneous view of life, in toto. Those who have done it, realise that superstitions are nothing but the devices invented by man to turn instantly ignorance into knowledge, mystery into miracle, quest into complacency, timidity into virtue, absurdity into ethics, and stupidity into vanity. They are the strongholds of traditionalism, barriers to progress and root cause of mass hysteria.

CLASSIFICATION

Superstitions may be for convenience, classified religious and non-religious. Let us take the second category first. Omens good and bad, are plentiful such as, those associated with numbers, days, throbbing of the eye, cat's crossing your path, dog's howl, owl's hoot and so on. Dreams are said to anticipate future, and somebody's look to spoil your health. Fantastic stories about ghosts and snakes are credulously indulged in.

The catalogue of such beliefs is endless. The point here is that it is the elders who inject these ideas into the innocent minds. Once the mind accepts one belief, it becomes receptive to any number and ceases to stand on its own legs. Children therefore, invent their own superstitions and spread that psychology. Success in the examination is attributed to a particular pen, or failure to somebody's ill-wishing. Thus, the foundations of self reliance, hard work, fearlessness, are undermined and then tendency to pass on the blame begins. It is carried forward in life.

Some other superstitions do even greater harm. They are the ones that preach hatred, prejudice and uncharitable attitudes. Women, widows, downtrodden castes, childless persons and physically deformed individuals are victims of superstitions. A superstitious mind can never be objective in analysing one's own behaviour in relation to these. The cautiously camouflaged beliefs in this respect suddenly raise their heads in unguarded moments.

ASTROLOGY AND PALMISTRY

Some of the oldest and hardest superstitions of man pertain to astrology, palmistry etc. Critical researches in them have shown that there is absolutely no scientific basis for them at all. Whatever predictions come true have been statistically proved to be nothing more than what the law of chance justifies. Man's adherence to them is explained only on psychological grounds. When chemistry developed, alchemy was given up as unscientific. This happened because man could afford to be rational in that respect. But as astronomy advanced, astrology could not be

discarded, because it touched the weakest core of human mind. This is as good as making a law and breaking it yourself to favour someone who is your favourite. A mind that can believe in astrology and astronomy both, can hardly find anything wrong in accommodating ill treatment of cattle with worship of cow, love for money with glorification of poverty, equality of souls with contempt for lower castes.

Innumerable examples are found of people making themselves more miserable by running after astrologers. Many wayward sons get encouragement to remain irresponsible, due to the theory of bad stars believed in by their parents. A historian once said that it would be possible to find out the battles lost by the Marathas, simply because they were guided by horoscopes instead of strategy.

If we want our children not to live on excuses, not to be after false praise or imaginary hope, if we want them to be free from the habit of passing on blame always to something beyond their control, then they must be kept above any weakness for these pseudo sciences. It would be a great service done to them.

RELIGIOUS SUPERSTITIONS

Now, let us consider the realm of religion. All faiths and beliefs sanctioned by religion are religious superstitions. They become sacred and form the most sensitive core of human mind. Those who discard superstitions as such, also cannot think of religious faiths and beliefs being kept in the same basket. In this connection it is necessary to go a little deeper into the nature and psychology of religion.

Religion in human mind has become a symbol of everything that is moral, noble,

good and sacred. It is something that gives meaning and purpose to this life; something that makes the existing social order of divine origin: something that is capable of offering promise, hope, justice, and a sense of belonging; something that shows the absolute reality and provides an ultimate solution to the fundamental problems of human existence. Such a concept is bound to be dear to the mind, no matter whether it is real or unreal, clear or confusing. Even a vague belief in the existence of such "something" is enough and once that idea is imprinted on the mind, anything that goes contrary to it, is bound to appear evil, and obviously cannot be tolerated.

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What about well water? It has to be drawn by 'unbathed' hands, using unpurified buckets every morning. Does it not become impure and hence the person who bathes with it?

ILLOGICAL EXCEPTIONS

Pollution is not supposed to affect metals to the same degree. How about the floor, wall, roof etc? Are they purified everytime an unbathed person, animal or insect passes over them? Do not flies and mosquitoes which sit on purified and unpurified persons alike make us a socialistic society of polluted?

Then again milk. The cow is not bathed before milking, nor does the milk-man. But milk is not polluted!

Is it not all crazy and superstitious?

COW SLAUGHTER: HOW LITTLE HAVE WE PROGRESSED!

R. P. Paranjpye

This article written years ago by our Founder President is still topical. In fact, in September 1977, some of the ardent followers of Mr. Vinoba Bhave planned to agitate for a total ban on cow slaughter throughout India

Rationalism is not merely an intellectual or metaphysical way of looking at this world. A true rationalist must look at all questions from a scientific point of view and must not be afraid of any conclusions to which he might be driven even though they may be opposed to some dearly cherished opinions which have been handed down from generations and which are in a way a part of his mental make-up. It is often difficult to reconcile oneself to

some of them, but the effort to do so must be made. It is only in this way that real progress of humanity can be achieved and our country, in particular, can win its proper place in the world. In this article it is proposed to consider the present movement in favour of a ban on cow-slaughter from a rationalistic and scientific point of view.

EXPLOSIVE NATURAL INCREASE :

I am going to discuss our attitude towards the cow which is called the mother of the Hindus and worshipped as such, with special reference to the present agitation for legal ban on cow-slaughter. From a rationalist point of view, the agitation seems absurd and the attainment of the objective absolutely impossible. I have nothing to say against the love for animals and want to see all animals treated kindly. But one cannot afford to disregard all practical considerations. If it were possible to allow every animal that is born, to continue to live in good condition and enjoy such happiness as an animal may be supposed to be capable of enjoying, nothing would please me better. But nature has so arranged matters that every animal pair produces far more young than will serve only to replace that pair. This is nature's way of ensuring that a species does not die off easily. If the thousands of eggs that one fish lays were all to develop into full grown fish, the ocean would, in the course of a few years, be full of descendents of that one fish and there would be left no room for any other marine animal. Mammals do not reproduce themselves in the same abundance,

but even they produce far more young than would suffice to replace the parents. The following extract from Darwin's 'Origin of Species' well illustrates the point :

"The elephant is reckoned the slowest breeder of all known animals. I have taken some pains to estimate its probable minimum rate of natural increase. It will be safest to assume that it begins breeding when thirty years old, and goes on breeding till ninety years old, bringing forth six young in the interval and surviving till one hundred years old. If this be so, after a period of from 740 to 750 years there would be nearly nineteen million elephants alive, descended from the first pair".

EXCESSIVE FERTILITY OF COW :

In the case of a cow the breeding begins at four years and continues till she is over fifteen and produces at least six calves in her life. So the descendents from a simple bovine pair would be over a crore after about 150 years, provided of course no calf meets with a violent death,

every one is fed properly and allowed to live as long as it can and die only of age. This is obviously an impossible prospect. A legal ban on cow-slaughter will not in the long run be to the benefit of the cows themselves, for they will merely exchange the butcher's knife for starvation, disease or the teeth of wild animals. It is questionable whether cows and other similar animals have feelings of the same nature and the same intensiveness as human beings, but supposing they have, I am sure they will not prefer the prospect of starvation and disease to a sudden though violent death. A mere appeal to the Hindu sentiment towards the cow will not solve the problem posed by the excessive fertility it shares with other animals.

WILL STERILISATION WORK ?

It will be said that human beings are also subject to the same prospect of excessive numbers, and where the population is not kept down by conscious methods like self-control or contraception, the people fall an easy prey to famine and pestilence, frequently helped by devastating wars. But

WRONG KEY

A knight was anxiously looking for the most trustworthy person to entrust the key to his very attractive wife's chastity belt. At last he spotted out a harmless-looking person and left the key with him before proceeding to the battle field. The knight had hardly reached the border of the town when he found the man come running after him shouting : "Sir, you have given me the wrong key".

these methods will not serve in the case of our bovine population. The male calves are even now generally castrated, but a simple method of sterilising female calves is not known, and hence their excessive reproduction cannot be controlled as the cows will necessarily seek to find mates at the proper time. Moreover, even if a simple method of cow sterilisation could be devised, it will not satisfy the religious sentiments of Hindus, as a barren cow is not an object of reverence, and only a cow in milk and with a calf (payaswini and sawatsa) is considered as an appropriate gift on religious occasions like funerals, shraddhas etc.

WILL TOO MANY BE GOOD FOR THE COWS?

The only rational course is to keep down the cattle population by eliminating surplus calves and old or otherwise unserviceable animals. This, of course, appears heartless, but except in special cases it is really the best for the animal itself. Even in the case of human beings we always envy an old man who dies after a sudden heart attack and escapes the pain and misery incidental to old age. An appreciable number of people are now in favour of euthanasia or a painless death for persons suffering from incurable and painful diseases like cancer and having no prospect of further happiness in future, though of course this should be entirely voluntary and under strict precautions to guard against abuse.

CHANGED LIVING CONDITIONS

The real fact is that we are too much concerned with the objective of keeping a

cow merely alive without thinking whether it is likely to be useful to man or at least whether it is likely to have comfortable life in future. We have to change our ideas in this respect in consonance with modern conditions. When the cow was in constant danger from disease or wild animals, it was right that every care should be taken to preserve it. But now improved sanitary conditions and advance in veterinary science have lessened the risk of disease, and the danger from carnivora has become negligible. The land available for cattle grazing is limited and is even diminishing owing to increasing demands of cultivation to meet the needs of the growing human population. There is thus no escape from the necessity of keeping down the numbers of our cattle, and the only way is to set about it in a scientific manner. A legal ban on cow slaughter will only increase the gravity of the cattle problem in India. That problem is the existence in the country of too many useless and uneconomic cattle and too few really useful cattle. If our cattle population could be reduced to a fraction and the rest fed and cared for properly, our agricultural economy will vastly improve.

ECONOMICS OF COW REARING

Anybody who has seen the sleek fine and well-cared-for cattle in other countries which do not ban cow-slaughter, and compared them with the miserable half-starved animals that are wandering about everywhere in our country, will realise that our reverence for the cow is entirely illogical and useless, and is a source of neither happiness to the animal itself nor utility to man. A cow that gives less than

a certain amount of milk is not an economic proposition. A certain minimum quantity of food is required merely to keep it alive and only the excess of the food given to it above this minimum is returned by it in the form of milk. One good cow giving ten seers of milk a day is a source of wealth to its owner, but ten cows giving one seer a day is the cause of his poverty. A rational attitude on this question is an urgent need of the country at present when we are planning for the future and aspiring to raise the standard of living of the common man. If, on the other hand, we are carried away by mischievous sentimental propaganda against cow killing and have recourse to fasting and satyagraha we shall certainly not achieve our objective.

IMPROVE ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

The State can and should take proper action, both legislative and administrative, in the matter of animal husbandry. It should ban the slaughter of useful cows giving, or capable of giving, a reasonable

amount of milk. It should encourage the agriculturist to keep only that number of calves which he can rear properly. Old and useless cattle should be eliminated in a painless manner, and for this purpose the proper regulation of our slaughter houses is urgently necessary. The methods used at present in our slaughter houses are revolting in the extreme and nobody will oppose well considered rules about their management. The slaughter of good milking animals as soon as they get dry is an economic scandal and should be put down with a high hand. Cattle colonies for valuable animals should be started at suitable places where adequate nourishing fodder can be grown and good water facilities are available. The collection, pasteurization and the sale of wholesome milk should be properly organized. It is in such directions that the state can legitimately take action which will conduce to the welfare of the people. But the sentiment which is at the base of the agitation against cow-slaughter is entirely irrational and is, in addition, not calculated to be successful owing to its inherent impracticability and absurdity. ☐

LOST UMBRELLA FOUND

A Priest was sermonising on the Ten Commandments. When he came to the Commandment, "Thou shalt not steal" the priest noticed that a member of the congregation became sullen and worried. He went on further and when he came to the Commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" he found the member's face got brightened up and cheerful.

After the sermon, the curious priest called the member and enquired as to what affected his moods. The man replied: "Father, when you came to the commandment on stealing I was reminded of the umbrella I lost and when you spoke on adultery I remembered where I had left it".

UNDER DEVELOPMENT AND SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS

ABRAHAM T. KOVOOR

Answering a question from me as to why he objected to the prosperous countries of the West giving help to the poorer countries of the East like the one from where I came, Labour M.P. Mr. Fenner Brockway said in a conference of freethinkers in 1961 in England:

"It is true that comparatively we are richer than most of the countries of the East. We prosper because we work hard depending on the fruits of science and technology without seeking the assistance of imaginary gods to better our life here and now. Your people, on the other hand waste their time

and energy to placate imaginary gods to better their lives after death! Do you want us to give you a share of the products of our hard labour to enable you to waste more time on prayers, meditation, poojas and pilgrimages? Have you any idea of the number of man-hours lost each year by able-bodied men and women of your countries wasting time during working hours for their spiritual exercises? While bells are rung at our work places to enable the workers to rest and refresh themselves to do more and efficient work, bells are rung several times during working time in certain Middle-East countries to enable the workers to conduct their prayers for ensuring a better life after their death?"

AUSPICIOUS TIME

While sensible persons in the industrial countries of the West consult specialists in scientific disciplines—economists, engineers, technologists etc., whenever they want to start a new industrial venture, our people in the East, even if they happen to be highly educated, will not attempt any progressive venture without an astrologer showing the green light. Auspicious time, piriths and poojas are more important to our development projects than science and technology.

When there was severe drought in the catchment areas of Mousekelle and Castle-reigh reservoirs in 1976 a special pooja was conducted at Sri Mahabodhi Vihara at Anuradhapura to invoke the blessings of deva to produce rain. "Within two hours of the ceremony the devas answered the prayers with a fairly heavy shower at Anuradhapura", said a newspaper report. It was

paradoxical to read in the same newspaper a couple of days later about some of these same persons, who indulged in the rain-making cult at Anuradhapura, taking part and speaking at a seminar on "Water Management and Control". It was rather strange that none of the speakers at this seminar spoke about the easy and cheap method of making rain water available for human use in any place and at any time by prayer.

THERMAL POWER AND TEMPLE COMPLEX

It was reported that, in connection with the 100th birth anniversary of the late Mr. D. J. Wimalasurendra, arrangements were made to lay the foundation stones for the construction of a temple complex on the dam site of the Mousekelle reservoir, and to dedicate them to God Saman. Could Mr. Wimalasurendra, the far sighted engineer, have ever envisaged that several years after his death—in a space age—some people of Sri Lanka would be squandering taxpayers' money to build a temple complex in the hope of obtaining electric power through the blessings of a non-existing legendary god?

On reading this in the local newspapers, the shocking news about the sacrifice of a 22 year old girl by the Adivasi tribes of Madhya Pradesh, India, for ensuring the strength of a river dam under construction, came to my mind. Speaking about this incident the Chief Minister Mr. Sethi said, "This tragic crime resulted from the superstitious belief held by the illiterate and ignorant hill-tribes of the area that the guardian deity of their hills could be pleased by the

shedding of blood of a virgin on the dam under construction."

ABSTAINING FROM WORK

Again under the caption "Pirith for a Week" the following news appeared in the Ceylon Daily News:—

"A week-long pirith ceremony begins today in the Senate Library to invoke the blessings of the Triple Gem on the country... Members of the public and many Buddhist organisations have been invited to participate."

Able-bodied men and women all over the country are invited to spend one full week without doing any work. Can we afford to do so because there are "materialistic" people in the West to work hard for us and give us their surplus? How true Lord Fenner Brockway was when he said that the prosperous nations of the West should put a stop to the practice of giving aid to the so called developing countries! This is exactly how the priestly class originated. When the primitive man, who lived by eating the flesh of animals he hunted, evolved into a farmer he could produce surplus food. Crafty ones among primitive farmers started to live as parasites on the workers consuming their surplus products on the pretext of possessing miraculous powers to help them to make their "life after death" better!

MAN-THE PROGRESSIVE ANIMAL

Although the lower animals have better perceiving powers than men, there is no progress in their mode of life down the ages.

This is due to the fact that, unlike men, they have no power of creative thinking. The spider of today makes the same type of web as their ancestors did millions of years ago. Even the apes of today lead the same type of life as their forbears did millions of years ago.

On the other hand, man has progressed, and is still progressing by leaps and bounds from the aboriginal state of his forbears. In all matters like shelter, food, clothing, communication, travel, health, defence, social life, economic security, man is progressing day by day.

In his aboriginal state man lived like a savage killing animals and fellow humans with clubs and stones for his food. He ate flesh raw. When he ate the flesh of animals that were killed in forest fires, he found it

softer. This led him to the art of cooking. When the flesh of the animals he killed got contaminated with salt, he found it tastier. This led him to add spices to make his food most palatable. He is improving his culinary skill day by day.

By domesticating animals and cultivating edible plants he found that he could get a continuous supply of food, and thus get more leisure to engage in intellectual activities. Today he is improving the quantity and quality of his food supply using scientific methods of hybridisation and selective breeding. Instead of depending on nature, as animals do, man is interfering with nature to improve his lot. Modern man no more depends entirely on natural rain or rivers, or on prayers and poojas for his water requirements. He uses irrigation engineering, tube wells and artificial rain-making to obtain water whenever and wherever he needs it.

EDUCATION vs SUPERSTITION

"The education reforms have the development of a scientific attitude and providing the ability to use the scientific method in solving problems among its objectives. Superstition provides a formidable obstacle in achieving them. The large amount of advertising space in newspapers bought by purveyors of charms and potions guaranteed to ensure success at examinations is only an index to the extent to which superstition has a hold on our people."

EXORCISM

Like the animals from which he evolved the primitive man's method of locomotion was by using his legs. The evolution of his mode of travel from bullock cart and dug-out canoes to the jet and atomic propulsion is as interesting as the evolution of his medical practices to preserve his health. Primitives believed that diseases were caused either by the anger of imaginary gods and demons or by the possession of "spirits" of dead persons. The technique he adopted for maintaining good health was by pleasing angry gods and demons by giving them bribes, respectably called "offerings" or by appealing to them through poojas and prayers. Medical practice was in the hands of a set of human parasites known as priests or kattadiyas. They claimed special powers to mediate between gods and men, or to exorcise non-existing spirits from the bodies of the sick. Although this type of cult is still practised and patronised by ignorant persons, intelligent men of today have improved their medical science by immunisation, antibiotics, organ transplanting, blood transfusion, surgery, anaesthesia, electronic pace-maker etc.

Of all animals on this planet man alone has the capacity to progress, going against the laws of nature or the "plan of the creator", because he alone has the capacity to engage in creative thinking. This is due to the superior quality of his brain.

CREATIVE THINKING

Creative thinking is the ability to think constructively building up new ideas by the process of association of previously acquired ideas. All our progressive ideas, whether by intuition or inspiration, result from such creative thinking. This, of course, is different from the subjective creative thinking resulting from the fantasies of surrealist visionaries.

MEDITATION OR HALLUCINATION?

Meditation and chanting of 'sacred' mantras are slow processes of auto-hypnosis. A lot of nonsense is spoken and believed about this primitive cult of inducing hallucinations. Numerous able-bodied men and women in the "spiritualistic" East waste their time in yogic asanas and at meditation centres in the hope of attaining "enlightenment", experiencing "heavenly bliss", "spiritual liberation", "self-realisation", "god realisation", "state of awareness" etc.

YOGA

Apart from the fact that yoga is a form of good physical exercise there is absolutely nothing miraculous about it. The tall claims of Hatha yogis, Raja yogis, Gnana yogis and Kundalini yogis that yogis over 300 years of age live in the Himalayas, they can eat glass and nails, drink poison, levitate in the air, leave their bodies and materialise in another, stop the heart beat and breathing, walk on water has no basis.

'SHAVING KILLS FATHER?'

I have a middle aged friend who is quite handsome but for his bushy hair in his ears. Out of curiosity once we happened to ask him why he doesn't cut it and appear smarter. Pat came the reply: "I will never do it". He went on to explain that twice he did cut it. On the first occasion, within a week he had to face some problem in the office. When he cut it on the second occasion, within a month his father died. What a scientific analysis!

RATIONALISM AND HEALTH

DR. P. KRISHNAN

More than three decades of association with the sick in India has convinced me that the greatest problem which a doctor faces in this country is not only lack of hygiene, not only lack of funds for medical care, not only bad nutrition, not only inadequacy of doctors or paramedical personnel, but the enormous superstition that has become part and parcel of the thought process of Indians. It would with all the vehemence at my command, say, that all the problems referred to above are to a very large extent made worse by the superstitions in the minds of people. A relentless war has to be waged against these superstitions.

VISITATION BY GODDESS

I would like to refer to a glaring example of this superstition even amongst the educated. I was taken to see a child obviously suffering from severe measles, which the mother had recognised. As I entered the room, the father, who was an educated man with a foreign post-graduate degree in Science, insisted on my removing my shoes before entering the room. As the readers may know it is an Indian custom that shoes should not be worn inside a room with a case of measles, chicken pox, small pox and other exanthematous diseases as it is considered that these diseases are caused by a Goddess Mariatha or Mariamman, the Goddess of pox, who would feel insulted if some one were to enter her holy precincts wearing shoes! I bowed to his wish. When I bent down to examine the child there was a howl of protest by the father who declared that he would not allow me to touch the patient as I may 'pollute' the patient and thus subject everybody to the wrath of the Goddess. The mother of the child who was a village lass pleaded with her husband that I should examine the child and prescribe some drugs as the child was obviously very ill with pneumonia complicating measles. The father was adamant. The few harsh words I had to say did not make any impression on him. (The mother came from a 'Rationalist' family, and the lack of education was more than compensated by the Rationalist tradition in the family). The child died without any treatment. Years later I met this foreign-retained intellectual and expressed my condolences. He appeared touched to the quick. "Don't condole for my child who has attained the lotus feet of Mariatha", he told me.

DIETARY SUPERSTITIONS

Take the superstitions regarding diet. With what authority and self confidence people speak about "heaty" food and "cooling" food, food that provokes "bile", food that "dries" up the "system"! The smugness and the self assurance of these dieticians are beyond description. Modern science does not accept these concepts which are the hang over of the 'tridosha' theory. In many families a child will not be given solid food until a ritualistic meal of rice is given in a Temple. It is heart-rending to see small children aged even up to two years brought up on liquids because the parents had not found the time to visit the temple. These children look as though they were born and bred under famine conditions. Fish which is one of the healthiest food for

children is banned as it will produce skin diseases. Fish is one of the cheapest source of proteins and is abundantly available. Ground-nuts are a good source of mineral proteins, fat and vitamins. In fact it is one of the most self contained diet. Yet there is a strong superstition against it. Ground nut produces bile! The thin skin on the ground nut is very nutritious. But everybody is taught to rub the skin and to remove it carefully before consuming ground nuts. The skin will "get caught in the stomach"!

SWEETS AND WORMS

A growing child requires weight for weight more sugar than an adult; yet parents will not give enough sweets to their children. Sweets produce worms! How an animate object, the worm, could

MANGALA SUTRA AND BANGLES

Hindu women, and for that matter men too, believe that Mangala Sutra and Bangles are the most auspicious and sacred things for a married woman.

If one goes into their origin with an open mind, one will realize both these are mere symbols of slavery. When the institution of marriage was in its primitive stages, man used to acquire woman by kidnapping her; and hand cuffing her and dragging her by a rope tied around her neck. In order to make it known to every one that a particular woman has already been enslaved by a 'hero', the rings around her wrists and the rope around her neck were permanently left as symbols. These symbols are the most auspicious things even in the present civilized (?) society.

evolve out of an inanimate object like sweets is not explained! Yet people see with their eyes that those children who freely buy sweets in the bazaar get infested easily with worms. The reason is that flies which feed on human excreta collect the eggs of the worms, (which are found in abundance in the motions of infested children) and deposit the eggs on the sweets when they sit on the sweets. So the connection between sweets and worms is through the fly and indiscriminate defecation.

During fever a child requires a lot of water. In fact growing children due to their higher rate of metabolism require weight for weight, much more water than adults. Yet children with fever are denied water. Water is supposed to produce "Janni". Now Janni stands for a lot of things from fits to upper respiratory tract infection. So the Indian child with fever gets rapidly dehydrated. And then there are "Vayu" foods: that is foods that produce gas. This "Vayu"

stands for a lot of things from passing excess of flatus to a catch in the back or even distension of the abdomen.

NO UNIFORMITY

The funny thing is that what is banned in one part of India is accepted as good in another part. What is considered dangerous in one part is considered good in some other part of India. Sweet lime and oranges contain a lot of Vitamin C which is good for the body and helps the body to resist infection. Yet both the fruits (all citrus fruits in general) are considered "cold". That is they are said to produce the very disease which they are known to prevent. Hence when a child is suffering from cold and fever there are mothers who would ban oranges and sweet lime.

Superstition in health is an endless tale of ignorance and smugness!

VEGETARIANISM OR CANNIBALISM

Gandhiji returned from South Africa to India after launching his first struggle against British Colonialism. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan who met him then gayfully accepted a glass of milk from one of the persons in the crowd. Gandhiji was startled and asked him how an authority in Hindu religion and philosophy could drink milk which amounted to taking cow's flesh, since milk was the essence of cow's flesh. Radhakrishnan made a quick retort: "In that case all of us are cannibals. Since we took mother's milk when we were infants, in essence we took human flesh." Gandhiji had no reply to justify his superstition!

Sitaraman Pattabhiraman.

ORIGIN OF HINDU SUPERSTITIONS

Prof. SURENDRA AJNAT

The Hindu Scriptures from the Vedas down to the 18th century compendiums, are the hot-bed of irrationalism.

DREAMS

In the Chandogya Upanishad we read : If a person sees a man with black teeth in his dream, he must believe that his death is at hand. If a woman is seen, it means the person will succeed.

MEDICINE OR SUPERSTITION ?

The Charak Sanhita, an ancient book

dealing with medicine and considered an authority by the Hindus as more advanced than even allopathy, preaches superstitions. Therein it is stated :

If a person who goes to call the Vaidhya meets him when he (the vaidhya) is offering oblations to the fire or is worshipping the manes, the vaidhya should take it for granted that the patient is at the death bed. He cannot survive at any cost.

If the vaidhya sees any bad omen or catches sight of ornamentation meant for an unhappy or dead person, he must not proceed to see the patient. If he sees certain auspicious omens such as curd, grains, a brahman, an ox, a king, a gem, a pot full of water or white horse, he should visit the patient.

FORTUNE

The Matsya Purana (Ch. 241) says that if a man feels throbbing in his right limbs it is auspicious for him and if he feels the throbbing in limbs of left side then it is ominous for him. In the case of a female, the throbbing on left side is auspicious and on the right side is ominous. If throbbing is felt in the forehead, it means land gain. The throbbing in the head denotes enhancement of wealth. The throbbing between the nose and eyebrows forecasts meeting with the beloved. Throbbing in eyes portends death. If it is felt in the vicinity of eyes, it means money gain. If it is felt in the back it means defeat and the feeling of it in the chest means success.

The Purana also tells the places, the throbbing whereof is ominous. To avoid the bad consequences, the Purana says that gold should be donated to Brahmins.

SCARED OF RED

The Ramayana (Sundarakanda) tells that if a person dreams himself drinking the oil, wherewith he has bathed; or if he dreams that he is wearing red clothes; or if he sees himself garlanded with the wreath of karvir flowers; or if he dreams himself sitting in a chariot drawn by donkeys, he is sure to die at an early date.

SHANKARA the illusionist though denouncing the very existence of the world, could not but preach superstitions. Commenting on the Vedanta Sutras (3/2/4), he says that to see oneself in the dream riding on an elephant or sitting in a chariot drawn by donkeys is ominous.

EARTHQUAKE : HOW CAUSED?

The Brihat Sanghita (32/12) and the

Maha Bharata (Drone and Shalya Parva) says that the aquatic animals living in the Ocean create earthquake or it occurs when the elephants bearing the burden of the earth, breathe heavily due to tiresomeness. Alternatively, the sins committed by the inhabitants of this planet cause the earthquake. The Brahma Purana (21/23-24) says when Shesha, the god-snake who is bearing the earth on its hoods, yawns, the earth quakes.

METEOR, A MISSILE ?

About the fall of a meteor, Garga, an old saint says in his book that it is a missile thrown by gods to direct good omens and ominous events. According to Brihat Sanghita and Adabbut Sagar, the falling meteors are the saints falling on the earth to take new births after the enjoyment of good deeds in heaven.

REAL FATHER VS LEGAL FATHER

Most Hindus, especially Brahmins, perform death anniversaries for their parents. It is believed that in the ancient days, on this day the dead person used to come back to accept the food offered. Once it so happened when a Brahmin invited his dead father to accept the food, a Muslim appeared before him claiming to be his real father. Annoyed and embarrassed with this unexpected incident, the Brahmin decided that henceforth the dead parents need not personally come on their anniversary day and instead some Brahmin will eat on their behalf. Even to this day the practice is continuing and the Mantras read that the food offered to the Brahmin goes to the 'real father' whoever it is! One aspect that even the Pundits are unable to explain is that if the ceremony is intended for the 'real father', then why is it performed on the death anniversary of the 'legal father'?

TACTICS OF GOD MEN

To understand religion dispassionately, it must be studied as a phenomenon and observed as a human behaviour. A religious behaviour, for all practical purposes, is a struggle to be on the right side of some imaginary power, with the desire of seeking favours for oneself. Its further purpose is to be an agent of that power and control other people. Larger the number of people you control, the bigger you are. This is true in any sphere of life. If men are classified into two categories, those who have to look after themselves and those who are looked after by others, big men fall in the second category. You can control others by power, position, learning, wealth etc. But to have power, position, learning, wealth etc. means a lot of botheration. The best way is to control those who already have these. This is done by religious leaders and god-men. It is possible only when people remain under the impact of superstitions.

There is one so-called higher side of religion, which attracts intellectuals, and must be dealt with. It is the path of "Know thyself". Nothing could be more important than that. But the true effort to know oneself calls for great courage, absolute honesty, complete humility, and ceaseless hard struggle at self-psycho-analysis. What is tried instead is auto-hypnotism through meditation, a mystic effort to jump over one's own vanity, jealousy, envy, hatred, meanness, intolerance, dishonesty, avarice, inhibitions, complexes, etc., and to capture the knowledge of god, hidden somewhere within the mind. When the mind is obsessed by the idea of hidden knowledge or god, there is no need to understand one's own weaknesses, because, having once discovered that god, they

would all automatically melt into piety. This is not only superstitious, misleading, but dangerous as well.

RELIGION RETARDS

In the early days when sciences were not developed, religion was the be-all and end-all of life. Knowledge was therefore, part of religion. Resorting to speculations, attempts were made to explain various natural phenomena. It was all right at that time, but not for all times. As sciences advance and whatever comes to be disproved, must be boldly discarded. This is exactly what religion does not allow. Two opposite examples from the history of science may be recalled in this context. For a long time English chemists held the false idea of "phlogiston". But when by 1778 A.D., Lavoiser, the father of modern chemistry, established the new theory of combustion, the false idea was immediately given up. This could happen because no superstition was in the way. But when Copernicus in 1540 A.D., replaced Ptolemy's geocentric theory of the universe with his helio-centric one, Church did not recognise it till 1822!

Dr. KOVOOR'S CONTRIBUTION

This happens even to-day. New inventions in medicine are immediately utilized to cure diseases of the body. But new discoveries of psychology and psychiatry are never received with open mind. Mind wants to remain a slave of superstitions. Dr. Abraham Kovoov has proved that religious superstitions are often the root cause of mental diseases. Among the neurotics treated by him, Dr. Kovoov found, by statistics, that prevalence of neurosis among communities, is directly proportional to the extent of superstitions held by them.

There is colossal ignorance about mental afflictions manifested as hysteria, hallucinations, stupor, melancholia, schizophrenia, glossolalia, cryptesthesia etc. We do not consider many mental and physical diseases as arising out of natural causes. That is why Dr. O. Somasundaram, psychiatrist, has observed that some of the beliefs and customs prevailing among modern men have their origin in pre-historic times. The "possession" patients, the victims of temporary insanity, are basically mal-adjusted personalities, suppressed under great mental strain and some psychological problem. But some of them are proud of it because others admire and even worship the phenomenon as something divine. The same is the case of mentally deluded persons in transcendental meditation, becoming victims of cryptesthesia—a neurotic condition in which one gets obsessed with the idea of having acquired supernatural powers. Dr. Quastel and Dr. Whearly have discovered that the hallucinatory experiences of mystics who enter trance are all due to the derangement of their body chemistry.

Now it is high time that no one need be puzzled or impressed by the so-called miracles of religion. Dr. Abraham Kooror has proved beyond doubt that "nobody has, and nobody ever had supernatural powers." Inventions may exhaust, reason may fatigue, experience would give its judgement, but religious superstitions in this world, would still remain unconquered. Right or wrong, religion must prevail, is the idea deeply imbibed by mind. This happens because religion mystifies ignorance, dignifies delusions, sanctifies superstitions, and finally justifies frauds.

SAVE CHILDREN

Our children should not develop such closed, suppressed or deluded minds. For that purpose they should be during their

impressionable ages, judiciously kept free from all kinds of superstitions including religious ones. Life after death, immortality of soul, incarnation, re-birth, heaven, hell, 'siddhis', blessings, rituals, pilgrimages, holy places, sacred texts, etc., are all concepts that ultimately cause enslavement of mind. Brought up under their impact men grow into mentally deluded personalities, externally pious and humanitarian but internally narrow, intolerant and vain. True, that some great religious leaders have done humanitarian work. But even in their case, religion proved as much a limitation as it was an inspiration. They would have been far greater and more useful to humanity, had they been free from it.

To fight against one's own old superstitions is a hard struggle in adult self-education. Those who have tried it for themselves, would realise the need to keep their children free from those influences. The spirited believers in religion would revolt against this kind of thought. But the parents who have never thought seriously about their beliefs, should try this experiment on their children, in their own interest. If a parent suffers from a physical disease, every precaution is taken to see that the children do not get the infection. All possible help of the medical sciences and of the latest researches in them is taken for the purpose. Why not then the same precautions be taken, where the mind and personality are concerned? Why no lesson from the latest researches in psychology, psychiatry, neurology etc. should be learnt?

POSITIVE QUALITIES

Some parents would be afraid that their children might go astray for want of religious influence. This is a superficial view. What about those who are spoiled in spite of
(Continued on page 267)

Letters

(Continued from page 246)

BALAJI SPECIAL

Sir,—Let me appreciate your efforts in improving FREETHOUGHT. This year, the series of special issues helped the journal to assert itself. It is a good piece of information to learn that Mr. Khushwant Singh professes himself a Rationalist.

The cover of this issue is very informative. I would request you that the remaining marks (Namas) may be published in the next or in some other issue.

Prof. Surendra Ajnat, Banga.

FREETHOUGHT

Sir,—The contribution for promotion of Freethought by 'FREETHOUGHT' is praiseworthy.

I firmly believe that articles in FREE-THOUGHT are calculated to dispel the dark forces of religion and superstition which result in bloodshed while encouraging the forces of sciences and humanism which shed light.

A. Sivalingam, Tiruchirapalli.

Sir, I am receiving a number of letters from my friends hailing FREETHOUGHT. LONG LIVE OUR IRA & FREETHOUGHT!

—P. Bhimanna, M.A., M.Ed.,
Tuni (A. P.)

TEST FOR REASON

Sir,—I feel happy to be a subscriber to FREETHOUGHT. My pleasure doubled when I saw the recent issue in which "Test for your reason" has been introduced. It not only improves the reasoning power, but also becomes an attractive feature of the magazine.

Vasi Reddy Madhu,
Kurnool (A. P.)

Sir,—I heartily congratulate Mr. Suryanarayana for this very fine new feature. My best wishes for the ascendancy of Rationalism.

Nelson Gomez, Cochin.

KOVOOR CHALLENGED?

Sir,—I have been reading FREE-THOUGHT regularly. I am really proud of the progress made by I. R. A. and FREE-THOUGHT.

I would like to mention here that Mr. Tirtadkar of Kolhapur in his report published in "Shree Weekly". Bombay has challenged Dr. A.T. Kovoov. Mr. Tirthakar is ready to show the ghost at any time and also says that "Dr. Kovoov himself is a powerful mantrik. However no steps seem to have been taken by I. R. A., Bombay Rationalist Association, Nagpur Rationalist Association or Dr. Kovoov so far. I am sure on receipt of this letter, you will look into the matter and do the needful to reveal the truth.

—Harish K. Deshmukh, Nagpur.

(I.R.A. has since challenged Mr. Tirthakar to show the ghost as per conditions laid down by Dr. Kovoov—Ed.)

STUDENTS' SECTION

Sir,—I suggest that a few pages of FREE-THOUGHT be set aside for students so that an interest is created in young minds towards reasoning and a scientific explanations, simple questions on religion and the like may be put forward to them along with suggestive answers which would put them in proper line of thinking.

—P.V. Jayaprakash, Bombay.

(The suggestion is well received and is under our active consideration. — Editor)

(Continued from page No. 265)

religion? What our children need are a sense of responsibility, habit of honest hard work, humane attitudes, purposefulness, modesty, self-reliance, self-criticism, courage, ability to apply intelligence to the problems of life, and the art of living. Of course, there is no short cut to these. Simply teaching no superstitions is not enough. But the minds that are free from delusions, illusions, suppressions and superstitions, have a far better chance of achieving these than they can otherwise have. Loaded minds can never grow at their best.

The question of erring on the safer side would worry many parents. But just what everybody does is no safer side at all, if the evils are realised. Even those who are not fully convinced on this account, can rest assured that it is already on the safer side. If the children in later life feel that the parents were wrong, it would take no time for them to succumb to religion and superstition. It is as easy as falling in a ditch. And if they realise the good done to them, they would reap the fruits. But in the other case, if and when the realisation comes, they would find that their minds are crippled and unable to stand on their own legs, in spite of the will to do so. They will have to waste five to ten years of their life, to come out of the situation, if at all they can do so. So in any case, to keep them free would be the best policy.

ENVIRONMENT

Of course, parents are not the only factors to influence and shape the children's minds. Almost all other forces—friends, relatives, neighbours, teachers, educationists, leaders, cinema, literature etc. would largely continue to be traditionalist. Moreover, both the parents may not agree on the issue. In spite of all these limitations, it would be wise for a father or mother to stand alone and set an example before the children. It is possible to give proper explanations of superstitious phenomena and nip some of them in the bud. It is possible to see that no fear complex is allowed to develop due to the ideas of ghosts, curse, hell, black magic bad dreams etc. It is possible to avoid consciously all such utterances that lead to

the encouragement of blind beliefs. It is possible to give them complete liberty regarding their participation in the religious rituals, if you have any for yourselves. It is possible to place before them a critical view of mythology. And it is also possible to avoid astrology in connection with their future.

Those who try this experiment consciously, will have to take adequate precautions also. Children should not become disrespectful, over-wise, adamant or indiscreet. Our aim is not to single out from the society; it is only to avoid the evils. Some compromise is necessary for adjustment in the given society. But to do certain things you do not like, for the sake of decorum or at times for mere survival, is quite different from being emotionally involved in them. Children will have to be taken into confidence and given guidance regarding the right type of behaviour in particular situations. Taking children into adequate confidence is something that many parents fail to do.

FUTURE SHOCK

Lastly, in this context, we should recall the warning given by Alvin Toffler. Change in life is coming at an alarming rate, but there is a lack of behavioural response to it, in personal lives. Due to that, a massive adaptational breakdown is feared in the west. Conditions in India are not fundamentally different. Scientific advancement and economic development on one hand, and revival of traditionalism on the other, is bound to create that situation anywhere. Problems never even dreamt of by our ancient forefathers are confronting us. Problems never thought of by us may confront our children in future. No ready-made solutions from the past would be available. They will have to work out their own solutions or face disaster. For that reason, their minds must be kept open, free, bold and adaptable. If we keep their minds tied up by the ropes of age old superstitions, would they ever be able to absorb the future shock?

(The author of the above article would be grateful to receive comments from the readers.)

News and Notes

RATIONALISTS' GET TOGETHER

A get together was arranged on 25th September, 1977 as per the decision of Madhya Pradesh Rationalist Association in the Bhilai Town-ship. An intelligence test was conducted by Mr. A.K. Menon for the ladies to check up their rationalistic views. Magic show and sports items were also included.

The Communal lunch was the special feature of the programme. There was a lecture by Mr. Varghese on rationalism. Finally President Mr. Parameswaran distributed the prizes.

S.V.S. Nair,

General Secretary, M.P.R.A., Bhilai.

RATIONALIST MARRIAGE

The registered marriage of Ms S. Manonmani, B.Sc., B.Ed., with Mr. P. Sundararaj, B.Com. took place on 14th September, 1977. The bride and the bridegroom belong to 'Forward Caste and Scheduled Caste' respectively. In the evening a reception under the Presidentship of Com. M. Kalyanasundaram, M.P. was held. Several speakers singled out the fact that the marriage was arranged by the parents of the couple and that it was not a love marriage. The couple belong to middle class. The mangalsutra was dethroned. There was no religious rite.

A. Sivalingam, Tiruchirappalli.

RATIONALIST AND SOCIALIST CONFERENCE

The Tenth Conference of the Rationalist and Socialist Movement of Tamilnadu took place on 17th and 18th September, 1977 in Madras. Mr. R. Kuchelar, Trade Union Leader presided. Mr. N.D. Sundaravivelu, former Vice Chancellor, Mr. A.S.K. Trade Union Leader, Dr. S. Sathiyavanimuthu, former Minister, Mr. V. Veeraswamy and Mr. S.L. Bharathi addressed the Conference. 29 resolutions were passed for spreading Rationalism and Socialism. Magician Mr. K. P. Swaminathan gave his performance. Dr. Jyothi Sankar's booklet "Periyar's Golden Words" was released.

AHMEDABAD UNIT OF GUJARAT RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION

Ahmedabad Unit of G.R.A. convened its General Body Meeting on 18-9-1977. Mr. Kamalashanker L. Pandya, President of I.R.A. presided.

The following Office Bearers were elected :

1. President — Prof. Jitendra Dholakia, 2. Vice Presidents—Mr. Haroobhai Mehta (Advocate), Mr. Jivanbhai Shah (Advocate), Pro. Jagdish Vyas and Prof. Prabash Sharma, 3. Gen. Secretaries — Mr. C. K. Balan, Mr. Narendra Dave, 4. Secretaries—Mr. Pravinbhai Rashtrapal and Mr. Vinay Kapadia (Advocate).

Fourteen Members were elected to the Executive Committee.

Apart from two resolutions on Dr. H. Narasimahiah and Casteism, it was decided to bring out a Rationalist periodical in Gujarat. An editorial board consisting of M/s. Kamalashanker Pandya, Yasin Dalal and Narendra Dave has been formed.

DOWRYLESS MARRIAGES

One of our readers at Telanrolu (Krishna Dt.) Mr. T. Chench Reddy, M.Com. got married to Ms. Sujatha on 14th October, 1977. The bridegroom sent a donation of Rs. 25 to FREETHOUGHT on the occasion of his Dowryless Marriage.

Another Dowryless and inter-caste marriage took place at Madras under the auspices of I.R.A. The marriage was between Mr. K. V. Sundaramurthy and Ms. A. Seshamma both members of the Inter. Marriage Bureau of I.R.A. Mr. R. Kuchelar, a leading Trade Union Leader, conducted the marriage. The marriage was complete with exchange of garlands by the bride and

bridegroom. Messrs N. D. Sundaravadi, velu, former Vice Chancellor of the University of Madras, A.S.K., Labour Leader and



Dr. T. Jayavelu also spoke on the occasion. Mr. S. L. Bharati, Vice President of I. R. A. welcomed the gathering.

WATER OF LIFE

Mr. Morarji Desai has been drinking urine which he considers as "water of life".

Mr. Jillian Rabertson of the weekly 'spectator' said that that he asked him straight out whether it is true he drinks his own urine and the reply was :

"For the past five or six years I have drunk a glass of my own urine, about six to eight ounces every morning. It is very very good for you and it is free. It does not cost anything. In America, doctors are using extracts from urine to treat certain heart condition and are charging thousands of dollars. But you can drink your own urine. Even the Bible says 'drink from your own cistern.' What is your own cistern? It is your own urine. Urine is the water of life."

Mr. Desai, also explained urine was a powerful cleanser and and external tonic. "You may massage it from ankle to waist and from head to waist."

P.S.:—Mr. Charan Singh and Mr. Raj Narain also use their own for healing their ailments.

"DRINK FROM YOUR CISTERN"

- ❖ You need not maintain urinals. You can save capital expenditure and maintenance charges.
 - ❖ You need not carry water bottles during your travel. Water is available from the Automatic Tap.
 - ❖ You need not maintain water pots and water coolers in your factories and offices.
 - ❖ No need for water lines. Municipalities and Corporations would be happy.
 - ❖ Since our Prime Minister successfully demonstrated that urine can be used as a perfume and a powerful cleanser, you can use it as a substitute for costly scents and detergents too.
 - ❖ SHALL WE NAME URINE AS "TONIC '77" ?
-

TEST FOR YOUR REASON-2

A. SURYANARAYANA

SELECTION OF MANAGER

Delighted at the intellectual honesty of Mr. Alfred, the Chairman decided to subject them to a second test.

This time he asked Alfred, Bill and Christopher to sit facing each other so that each could see the other two. He then showed the same two white and three black hats and told them that he would select any three and place on their heads.

A new condition is that after their eyes are opened if any one sees atleast one person wearing a black hat he must raise his hand. Without further questioning, whoever calls out the colour of his hat first would be adjudged winner.

He then blindfolded all the three and placed three hats selected by him on their heads. After opening their eyes, almost instantaneously all the three raised their hands. For a minute all of them were dumb

founded. Then quietly and triumphantly Alfred said 'Sir, mine is Black'. Can you explain how Alfred could make it out?

(Solution in next issue)

Entries should be received by 15th November, 1977. Other rules remain the same as in October, 1977 issue.

SOLUTION FOR TEST NO. 1

(Published in October, 1977 issue)

If both Bill and Alfred were wearing white hats Christopher could have easily made out his as a black one. Since he could not reply, either both Bill and Alfred must be wearing black hats or one of them black and the other white. Using this logic, if Alfred had a white one, Bill could have known his to be a black one. Since he would have seen a black one on Alfred's head, Bill could not make out whether his own hat was white or black. Drawing a logical inference from the dilemmas of Christopher and Bill, Alfred concluded that his own was black.

Though about 100 entries have been received, only those of the following 17 readers were found to be correct solutions for Test No. 1 :

M/s. J. C. B. Abraham, Madurai ; K. Ashok Kumar, Khopoli ; S. L. Bharati, Madras ; Chander Raju, Kalpakkam ; V. K. Chiranjivi Rao, Anakapalle ; P. V. Jayaprakash, Bombay ; K. K. Kishore, Zamigorpalli ; T.P. Kunhiraman, Ayancheri ; T. Nagaraju, Chitradurga ; Nelson Gomez, Cochin ; Dr. U.R. Prasad, Bangalore ; Dr. T.K. Rajan, Mathilakam ; S. Ramakoteswara Rao, Bapatla ; Roy Philip, Tiruvalla ; R. Subramanian, Madras ; Vasireddy Madhu, Vijayawada ; and Ms. B. Vimala, Repalle :

The prize of Rs. 10/- goes to Mr. Nelson Gomez, a student member from Cochin.

Our congratulations to all the above seventeen readers.

AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AN APPEAL

We are grateful to the following for their generous donations for FREETHOUGHT.

	Rs.
A well wisher	50 00
Mr. Chander Raju, Kalpakkam	10 00
Dr. V.Y. Kota Reddy, Kandukur	16 00
Dr. V. Prabhakara Rao, Rajahmundry	18 00
Prof. J.C.B. Abraham, Madurai	20 00
Mr. T. Chenchu Keddy, Telaprolu	25 00
Less than Rs. 5/-each	5 00
As per october, 1977 issue	710 00
	854 00

Other sympathizers of the Rationalist Movement are also requested to help the journal financially.

Treasurer, I.R.A.

NEW MEMBERS

We heartily welcome the following New Members.

Membership No.	Name	Place
Life Members :		
LM—40	Dr. B. Mari Chetty,	Salem (Tamilnadu)
—41	*Dr. V.Y. Kota Reddy, B.Sc., M.B.B.S.	Kandukur (A.P.)
—42	*Dr. V. Prabhakara Rao, M.B.B.S.	Rajahmundry (A.P.)
—43	Dr. Rajeev K. Joshi, M.B.B.S., (Bom)	Bombay
	M.C.P.S.	(Maharashtra)
Ordinary Members :		
M—426	Mrs. N. Parameswari	Madras (Tamilnadu)
—427	Mr. Y. Surinageswara Rao	Kuppam (A.P.)
—428	Mr. Era. Anbarasan	Madras (Tamilnadu)
—429	Mr. Ambanatha Moorthy	Madras (Tamilnadu)
—430	Mr. Janardhanam	Bombay (Maharashtra)
Student Members :		
SM—39	Master Yash Y. Lokhandwala	Bombay (Maharashtra)
—40	Mr. P.U. Ramamohan Choudary (B.Com.)	Vijayawada (A.P.)
—41	Mr. Sitaraman Pattabiraman	Madras (Tamilnadu)

*Converted from Ordinary Members.

GENERAL SECRETARY, I.R.A.



"The member should learn some agricultural economics. Human beings are more important than cows. I am prepared to resign my Prime Ministership on this issue. The policy of the Government is perfectly clear. We stand or fall on this point. I would like to face any amount of agitation, and not give in on this issue."

—Jawaharlal Nehru.